



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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Reps. Shuler, Jones Introduce “Family Friendly Flights Act” *Bipartisan Legislation to Curb Violent Images Shown on Airplanes*

Washington, D.C. – Representative Heath Shuler (D-NC) and Representative Walter Jones (R-NC) today announced the introduction of the bipartisan *Family Friendly Flights Act* at a news conference on Capitol Hill. The legislation is in response to airlines showing movies on publicly viewable screens that contain extreme violent content. Recently shown films have included *Fracture*, *Shooter*, and *The Last King of Scotland*.

“As the father of two small children, I understand and firmly believe that parents must have the right to decide what their children see. My wife and I don’t take our children to violent movies at the theatre. We don’t allow them to watch violent shows on TV, and we don’t let them play violent video games. Yet, when we fly with our children, or when any parent flies with their children, the airlines are deciding what is right and appropriate for our children,” said Rep. Shuler.

One airline website states that their publicly viewable entertainment, “...may contain material not suitable for everyone. Parental guidance and viewer discretion are recommended.” Unfortunately, while parents can control whether their children can listen to the movies, they have no control over whether their children see the images.

“As a member of Congress, I have the great honor of representing the citizens of Eastern North Carolina. What makes me so proud of my constituents is that they live their lives for God and country and they nurture these beliefs in the lives of their children. These are the values this country needs,” Representative Jones said. “The goal behind this legislation is to empower parents to protect their children from exposure to violent and mature images on public screens aboard airplanes. This legislation will be one avenue to help parents take back their right to determine the appropriateness of the content to which their children are exposed.”

The Family Friendly Flights Act calls for the creation of a family friendly seating section on airplanes, from which these publicly viewable screens would not be visible. Airlines would be required to provide seating in this “Family Friendly” section for children under 13 and at least 1 adult traveling with the child. Additionally, the airlines and its

employees would be required to offer the opportunity to request seating in the “Family Friendly” section to adults traveling with children.

The legislation affects only in-flight programming shown on the main cabin screens, individual screens in seatbacks and private portable DVD players would not be affected.

The idea for the *Family Friendly Flights Act* came from a letter Rep. Shuler received from a constituent who was upset at the films being shown on a cross-country flight. Also, Jesse Kalisher of Raleigh, North Carolina has been spearheading a grassroots movement to get airlines to offer less violent films. His website, www.kidsafevideos.org, has brought national attention to the issue.

“It is impossible to prevent a young child from seeing the images shown on the giant screens on an airplane. We are asking our airlines to be good corporate citizens, to create a family friendly section of the airplane, and to return parents their rights,” Rep. Shuler concluded.

Representatives Shuler and Jones were joined at the news conference by Representative Joe Donnelly (D-IN) and Mr. Kalisher.

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